

**PROBLEM SOLVING TOOLS AND
TECHNIQUES
IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SECTOR**

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**CERT HE SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

**PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING
BMSW4004**

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Introduction

“Care for Carers” is a start up agency providing domiciliary care to vulnerable people in their own homes. The target of clients is mostly elderly people, or disabled persons. The agency, after a first assessment provides to send carers in different time of the day to help people to maintain their independence.

The shifts start early in the morning till late in the evening for seven days a week. The agency has employed since the beginning 20 support workers working on a weekly rota alternating morning shifts and afternoon shifts.

The business of the new agency is improving every day with new clients and new requests of help from service users.

The manager is facing some dissatisfaction from the employees regarding their working hours and life balance. Most of them are under pressure and are asking for more day off or change in their shifts, and often they are calling sick leaving the rest of the employee with more work to be done.

For this reason, the consultant manager is trying to understand how to find a satisfactory solution to the complex problem.

Company charter

- ❖ Provide the highest quality care and support possible
- ❖ Treat people with respect
- ❖ Encourage independence and self-fulfilment
- ❖ Embrace individuality
- ❖ Enhance self esteem
- ❖ Preserve dignity
- ❖ Support self-expression
- ❖ Recognize the right to take risk
- ❖ Promote freedom of choice
- ❖ Continually evolve and improve what we do

Reason of job dissatisfaction

A good management should consider which are the reason of their employee's dissatisfaction using proper skills to evaluate: listening, evaluating, and communicating.

- ✓ **Listening** is more than just to hear, it is about the understanding of what the problem is, and it can be referred by employers coming to explain their concerns or by supervisors having the perception that something is not going well.
- ✓ **Evaluating** is the process of action after gathering information and processing all the practical options: as act, consult experts or pay external consultant.
- ✓ **Communicating** is the ability to let people know what your decisions are, and to use the appropriate channel of communication.

Effective problem-solving steps

1. Identify the problem
2. Specify cause, reason, and effect
3. Identify practical solutions
4. Evaluate and select promising solutions
5. Planning action
6. Monitor the plan

The first step to be able to solve a specific problem in organizations is the understanding of what the problem is

Identify the problem

Our organization has an organic of 15 care workers and the number of service users is 200, It means that every care worker must support at least 13 people every day.

Our shifts are from 8 in the morning until 8 in the evening and every visit can vary between half an hour and 45 minutes each. But we must consider the travelling time between each client and sometimes it takes a lot because of traffic and buses timetable.

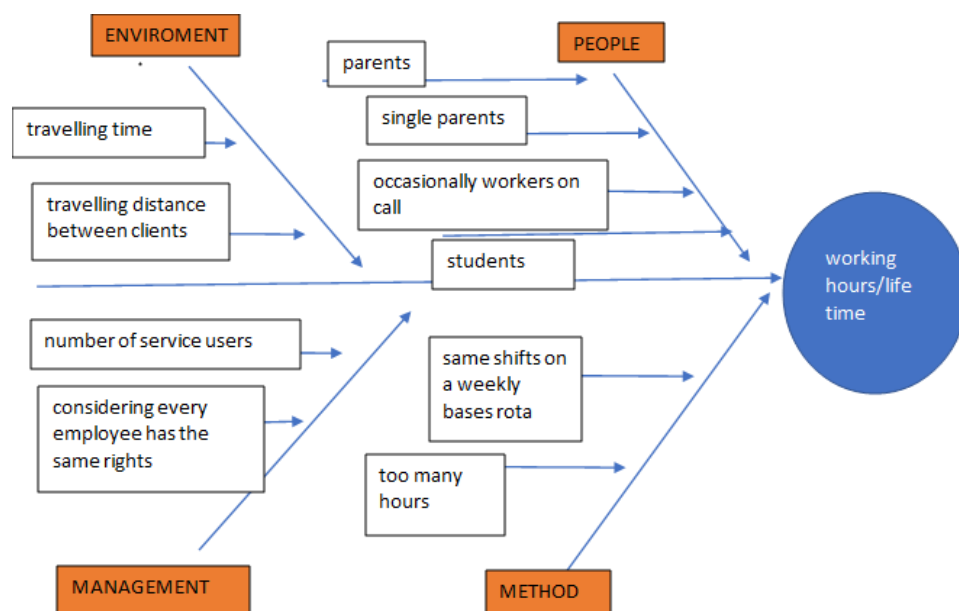
Some of our employees are complaining difficulty to follow all these clients and lack having life balance with their working hours. All our employees are working full time.

Cause and effect

After having identified what the problem is, the second step is to analyse what has caused it and what are the effects on the organization. To do this we have different tools available as:

- SWOT analysis
- PESTLE analysis
- Fishbone analysis

In a small organization such “Care for Carers” I have used the third one: **Fishbone Analysis** to help me to separate and categorise potential causes of the problem.



What is causing dissatisfaction in my care workers?

They feel overwhelmed and not having a satisfactory balance between their working hours and life balance. Analysing the typology of the workers, we have different kind of

PEOPLE: students, parents, single parents and occasionally workers to be on call for emergency.

METHODS: how we assign shifts? We use a weekly basis rota on full time workers.

MANAGEMENT: we have a high number of service users growing every day; we do not make any difference between our employees

ENVIROMENTAL ISSUES: travelling time between their own home and client's homes: travelling time between each client during the day

What are the potential causes of this problem? How can it affect the organization?

The number of service users is growing every day, we have a high demand of our services.

The number of care workers is insufficient to cover the demand.

These two principal causes can affect the organization if we lose clients and workers.

In this particular moment with Covid 19 cases rising every day we cannot close our eyes; we need to act.

Practical solutions

My first step is to launch a survey involving all care workers to understand their needs. We must consider the typology of people and the hours they prefer to work, trying to find a balance between their needs and the company needs. This is because, before to go forward with the next step I want to be sure all my workers can give their help at their maximum potential. The questions in the survey are based on what the best time could be for them to work, if they would be happy to work part time instead of full time, the area where they are living and the kind of transport they are using to go to work.

After the survey, the Rota co-ordinator will be allowed to give a blank timetable where every worker can fill their availability for the week in advance, these preferences will be taken in high consideration before the definitive rota will be exposed.

As the second step will be to recruit new care workers, the company must ensure all the people already working for us to be happy with their pay and timetable.

The recruitment team will be instructed to find new workers in the areas and times we are in more need and encouraging part-times workers to cover weekends and bank holidays.

Evaluating solutions

Which departments of the organization will be involved? And at which cost?

For the survey all the consultant managers and Human Resources will be involved on the data collection and IT department will be involved to create blank timetables to send by e-mail to every employee.

We are also implementing a psychological department to help all our employees managing stress in a general way giving advice as following:

- Taking more exercise or going for a walk
- Taking time out for yourself
- Doing something you enjoy
- Taking a deep breath
- Counting down slowly in your head
- Removing yourself from a situation and taking time out
- Talking through how you feel with your line manager
- Attending any stress management courses or workshop available
- Engaging in relaxing activities whilst away from work
- "Looking at your diet and substance intake, for example caffeine, and managing a sensible intake"
- Undertaking self-awareness activities
- Talking through your stress with a counsellor
- Talking to a human resources advisor or occupational health advisor available in the company ("Ways to Manage Stress - Active Social Care")

As we all can face stressful time in any situations, we remind to all of you that face to face or group sessions are available contacting your occupational health advisor, human resources team or your direct line manager.

Communicating changes and solutions

Communication to all our employees,

We are facing a challenging time due to the COVID-19 situation but, we are also happy to communicate that our business is growing fast. The number of service users is rising every day. We have a high demand of people in need of care.

We are trying to find every available solution to make our employees comfortable with the job and their working hours.

As a company we are going to develop a strategy plan looking forward to recruiting new care workers to join our team.

But before to recruit new workers we want to be sure that the team already employed with us will receive all the help to work in the best environment.

I have personally evaluated the complaint you have forwarded to your direct supervisors and acknowledged that all of you is working hard to cover all the shift assigned.

The first step of the plan is to recognize your real availability to cover shifts and in wich area. This is to reduce the travelling time to all of you finding service users in your living area.

In the next few days all of you will receive an e-mail from the IT service with a blank timetable attached reporting the shifts we need to cover; we will ask you to fill your timetable choosing the clients you can cover so that your rota co-ordinator will find easy to fill the final rota. You will be asked to cover also some shifts not asked at the beginning, and we trust on your comprehension. You will be awarded on your availability on unpreferred shifts with a raise in your hourly pay

The second step of this structural change will be to recruit new professional care worker to implement our successful team.

Monitoring the plan

Consultant managers will be available to all our workers to give them the support they need because the wellbeing of the staff is the company wellbeing. All our staff will be addressed to every benefit available from the company and from the Government.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS → Successful teamworking → Excellent communication → collaboration	WEAKNESSES → New business → Initial budget
OPPORTUNITIES → Great reviews from clients → Budget increment → New employees hiring	THREATS → Self-isolation period → Number of support workers

In the above table related to a SWOT analysis of our company we can realize which strengths and weaknesses our company has and with opportunities and threats we have.

Our consultant team and I are hardly working on it to figure the grow up and increase our budget to make sure the company environment is comfortable to all our staff and clients, delivering the best person-centred care.

CONCLUSION

In our first year of opening “Care for Carer” has reached all the planned goals delivering an outstanding service to all our clients. The first thank you is to all our first line staff that has hardly worked in a tough time with an extremely low budget but has given to the company the opportunity to increase the business. This is the reason we can congratulate with all of you with a raise on your hourly pay

We are receiving compliments from the clients using our service and from the social services asking for our external help, we are all part of a community team at the service of vulnerable people and their families.

We promote the importance of a web around service users to guarantee their independence and wellbeing being surrounded of caring and compassionate people.

I want to say thank you also to the managing team always ready to help and collaborate in the working environment as enlarged family, we want to remind to all our staff the availability of our psychologists to help to manage stress in face-to-face sessions if needed and with general recommendation.

The success of our organization is possible with all of us collaboration.

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